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Navy Medicine ... Our Presence Matters

Filed under [HOSPITALS](#), [LEADERSHIP](#), [MILITARY MEDICINE](#) (NO COMMENTS)

By Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general and chief, [U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery](#)



Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general, (back row four in from right) met with U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit 2 staff in Kampong Cham, Cambodia. (Photo by Capt. Dora Lockwood)

Earlier this month I wrapped up my first visit to our research facilities in Southeast Asia. I visited the [U.S. Naval Medical Research Center-Asia \(NMRC-Asia\) in Singapore](#), the [U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 \(NAMRU-2\) in Phnom Penh](#) and the Health Affairs Attaché office at the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi. I was truly impressed with what I saw and I'd like to share with you some highlights of my trip.

Let me start by saying Navy Medicine is making a significant impact on worldwide health. On this trip, I personally observed the dedication, commitment and cooperation of our global research and development efforts.


My first stop was [NMRC-Asia](#). Building on a legacy of nearly 70 years of research in the region, NMRC-Asia is working very closely with our regional partners to prevent, mitigate, and control infectious disease. Our Navy Medicine personnel are working hand-in-hand with the [U.S. Embassy in Singapore](#), distinguished Singaporean researchers, international health organizations, U.S. government agencies and the [Singapore Armed Forces \(SAF\)](#) on cooperative research initiatives. Together, we are focused on global health security.


I met with the U.S. Ambassador to Singapore, the Singapore Armed


Navy Medicine Video


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| |
|--------------------|
| February 2015 (7) |
| January 2015 (12) |
| December 2014 (17) |
| November 2014 (11) |

Forces Chief of the Medical Corps, and several senior SAF medical officers. Our discussions revolved around advances in military medicine, ongoing research efforts and the strategic value of our medical partnerships. There is no doubt that through our collaborative medical initiatives, we are making a strong relationship stronger.



Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general, exchanges gifts with Rear Adm. Kang Wee Lee, Singapore Armed Forces chief, Medical Corps. (Photo by Capt. Dora Lockwood)

My next stop was our research lab in Cambodia with a visit to NAMRU-2. They are currently operating a laboratory located at the National Institutes of Public Health in Phnom Penh. The work being conducted there is not only important for the health of Americans and Cambodians, but for everyone around the world. Their research plays a critical role in our national security by looking into emerging infectious diseases that could threaten our deployed military service members.

While in Phnom Penh, I met with the U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia, the director of the Health Department for the Ministry of National Defense, and the Cambodia Minister of Health. We discussed our mutual commitment to continued public health partnerships and how medical engagement builds bridges of understanding and support between nations.



Lt. Cmdr. Mike Prouty, head of laboratory sciences, U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit 2, discusses research in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia, with Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general. (Photo by Capt. Dora Lockwood)

I also had the opportunity to visit a NAMRU-2 field study site — a village in the Kampong Cham Province — and I witnessed life in rural Cambodia. I visited the homes of several families. I saw children there, some who were ill, some who had been infected by a strain of influenza or some other infectious disease. It was there that I saw firsthand how the talented and professional Cambodian and U.S. Navy researchers are working together to prevent the outbreak of diseases around the world ... starting with one small child. They work so passionately, not thinking of themselves, but for that child, out in the province that will grow up to live a happier, healthier, longer

life.

Finally in Vietnam, I met with the Deputy Chief of Mission at the [U.S. Embassy in Hanoi](#) and the Vietnam People's Army Director General of the Military Medical Department. In addition, I toured several of their medical facilities. These meetings were instrumental in providing an overview of the many health related projects already in place and possible areas for future collaboration.

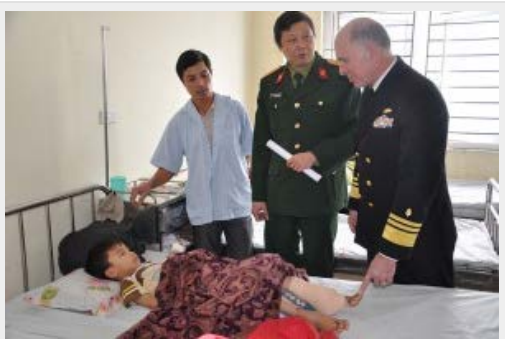
The hands-on exchanges demonstrate the cooperation between our militaries. Specifically, the Vietnam Interventional Burn Management Subject Matter Expert Exchange with Naval Medical Center San Diego in 2013, the [U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\)](#) and recent conferences with U.S. Pacific Command are just a few examples of the

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|---------------------|
| October 2014 (15) |
| September 2014 (20) |
| August 2014 (14) |
| July 2014 (13) |
| June 2014 (8) |
| May 2014 (11) |
| April 2014 (9) |
| March 2014 (14) |
| February 2014 (7) |
| January 2014 (7) |
| December 2013 (7) |
| November 2013 (12) |
| October 2013 (7) |
| September 2013 (14) |
| August 2013 (13) |
| July 2013 (11) |
| June 2013 (22) |
| May 2013 (15) |
| April 2013 (14) |
| March 2013 (14) |
| February 2013 (14) |
| January 2013 (12) |
| December 2012 (11) |
| November 2012 (11) |
| October 2012 (7) |
| September 2012 (9) |
| August 2012 (12) |
| July 2012 (13) |
| June 2012 (17) |
| May 2012 (22) |
| April 2012 (14) |
| March 2012 (13) |
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| December 2011 (13) |
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| October 2011 (22) |
| September 2011 (12) |

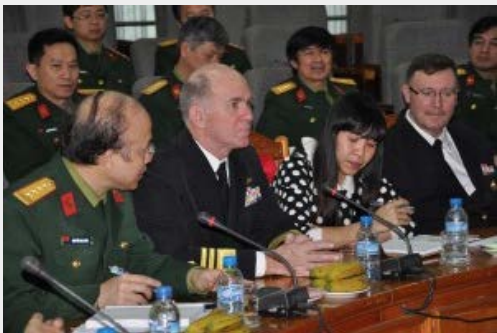
way we are working together and learning from one another.

We were given unprecedented access and visits in what is clearly a way to foster cultural exchange and medical sharing to benefit the region and the world. These exchanges exemplify a unique opportunity to advance medicine through collaboration and underscore our commitment to global partnerships.

Whether we are providing medical care through one of our humanitarian assistance efforts, partnering with local ministries of health, or conducting disease surveillance at one of our labs around the world, Navy Medicine is making a significant impact on global health, and by doing so, we are ambassadors of good will and fostering understanding between militaries and nations.



Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general, meets with a patient at the National Institute of Burns, Hanoi, Vietnam. (Photo by Capt. Dora Lockwood)



Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general, meets with Vietnamese military officials during a visit to the National Institute of Burns, Hanoi, Vietnam. (Photo by Capt. Dora Lockwood)

As our Navy, our nation, and the world, face the future, I know we can count on the Navy Medicine team and our global partners to support them with world-class operationally relevant health and medical research.

As I reflect on my trip, I am repeatedly inspired by the teamwork and the unselfish passion that I observed. Navy Medicine...your presence matters! Thank you for what you do to support our mission. I am so proud and humbled to serve as your surgeon general.

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|------------------|
| August 2011 (16) |
| July 2011 (10) |

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